No. 47

CAUSES

OF

FASTING AND THANKSGIVING,

OR THE

SIGNS OF THE TIMES;

IN WHICH THE

Evils and Dangers of the Present System

OF

TITHES AND REGIUM DONUM,

ARE SPECIFIED,

AND SOME LATE IMPROVEMENTS IN CHURCH AND STATE POINTED OUT

BY THE

EASTERN PRESBYTERY

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BELFAST:
PRINTED BY JAMES WILSON, 70, HIGH-STREET.

MDCCCXXXV.

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"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"

THESE questions are interesting. They were always important, but never more so than at present. Christian watchmen should endeavour to answer them. Those who could not discern the signs of the times were, in the commencement of Christianity, severely reprimanded by the Redeemer himself. If such stupidity was censurable *then*, it is surely no less blameable *now*. Churches are agitated; States are agitated. The heavens and the earth are shaking. Scarcely a single section of the Christian church has escaped the shocks of the ecclesiastical earthquake. Political commotions are also alarming. On the Continent of Europe, for nearly half a century, revolution has succeeded revolution in rapid succession. Some states have been repeatedly revolutionized, and to some who shed the blood of God's saints and martyrs, he is at present giving blood to drink. Between light and darkness, between truth and error, between liberty and despotism, there is at present a deadly struggle. The British empire is in a state of unusual agitation. Ireland, in particular, feels the heavings of the general earthquake. She has been long distracted by factions and parties. Under such circumstances, and at such a crisis, we conceive it our duty as watchmen placed on the walls of Jerusalem, to answer the question "What of the night?"—to point out faithfully "the signs of the times,"—to "lift up our voice like a trumpet—to tell Judah her transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins,"—and to show "what Israel ought to do."

Causes of fasting, and also of thanksgiving, have been

frequently published by the highest judicatory of our church. Catalogues of those sins with which we stand chargeable, as individuals, as families, as churches, and as a commonwealth, have been repeatedly exhibited. To these we refer our readers in general, and especially the flocks committed to our charge. At present, we shall only advert to some public evils connected with the present extraordinary movements, and particularly to TITHES and REGIUM DONUM.

Ireland has been long in a state of agitation, and tithes have been the principal cause. By some, these tithes are regarded as a blessing, and by others, as a curse. To the mass of the population tithes are odious. That they are not only a grievance, but a very great evil, we proceed to show.

As Dissenters we complain that Episcopalians, who do not constitute one-tenth of the inhabitants of this country, should domineer over the other nine-tenths, and force them to maintain a hierarchy which they regard as Antichristian.—*Antichristian* we say; for can there be any thing more opposed to the simplicity of the Christian religion, which forbids us to call any man master or father—which assures us that one is our master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren—and that if any man be great among us he should be servant of all? Can any thing be more opposed to this simple, self-denying system, than the hierarchy of the Church of England and Ireland, consisting of deacons, priests, rectors, deans, archdeacons, bishops, archbishops, primates, &c. &c. &c., with a king or a queen at the head of the system? "Call no man father," says our SAVIOUR. "Yes, but we will," say the advocates of Prelacy. "We will call our clergy fathers. We will call them, RIGHT REVEREND FATHERS IN GOD!" "Call no man master," says our SAVIOUR. "Yes, but we will," says the Episcopalian church. "We will call our ministers *Lords*. We will call them *Lords Spiritual*. We will address them with such epithets as these, *Your Lordship* and *Your Grace!* The apostle Paul assures us that the elder who labours in word and doctrine, should be counted worthy of double honour or emolument. "Not at all," say Episcopalians. "The very reverse shall be the case with us. Our labouring clergy, our curates who labour

in word and doctrine, we will *starve;* but our dignitaries, many of whom do not labour at all, we will *pamper!* It is not the *laborious*, but the *indolent* clergy that we count worthy of double honour! The apostle Paul says, "I suffer not a woman to speak in the church." "Nay, but," say the advocates of Prelacy, "*we* will suffer her to speak in the church. We will suffer her not only to *speak*, but to *rule* the church; aye, and we will suffer her to be head of the church." A clergyman is the head of the Church of Rome; but a layman is head of the Church of England. Roman Catholics make a *man* the head of their church; Episcopalians are content with a *woman* for their head. The apostle Paul says, "I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man." "But we do," say Episcopalians. "We suffer a woman to exercise authority over the man—over all the men in the nation—over all our bishops and our archbishops." This authority has been frequently exercised with a vengeance. Queen Elizabeth browbeat and threatened, suspended and deposed Episcopalian clergymen at her pleasure. She upbraided the bishop of Ely as a proud prelate; she assured him that she had made him, and that she could unmake him; that if he were not obedient, she would unfrock him immediately. Bishops and archbishops can be made and unmade by kings, queens, and parliaments, by Papists and by Infidels! One year has only elapsed, since ten mitres were blown away by one puff of the British Parliament! Our blessed Redeemer came in the humble character of a carpenter's son, meek and lowly. His apostles were humble mechanics, fishermen, tent-makers, &c. Their divine Master taught them humility. By precept and example he discouraged both ambition and avarice. Prelacy is calculated to encourage both. Episcopalians conceive that the clergy should rise above each other in regular gradation, according to the various ranks in society. They have humble curates to mix in society with the poor—rectors and deans to associate with the middle classes—and bishops and archbishops, who may be fit companions for noble Lords, Earls, and Dukes! Yes, they have bishops and archbishops, who, by the splendour of their equipage, their pomp and their pageantry, are able to vie with the nobles of the land. And thus they teach men "*to renounce the pomps and*

vanities of this world!" Such a hierarchy we regard as Antichristian; and to force Dissenters to support it, we regard as a national sin, calculated to draw down national judgments.

What good has this hierarchy done? or rather, what good have the emoluments of this hierarchy done? What good have tithes done? They have done much evil.

1. They have operated as a dead weight on industry, and a barrier to improvement. In consequence of their operation, a large portion of one of the finest countries in the world remains uncultivated.

2. They have corrupted the church by the introduction of errors and heresies. Tempted by her wealth, multitudes who do not believe her creed subscribe her Articles. Though her Articles are Calvinistic, Arminianism is generally taught within her pale; nay, Arianism itself has been sometimes taught, and even published to the world. By her immense emoluments, her creeds and confessions, her oaths and subscriptions, have been rendered quite useless; nay, worse than useless; they have proved the occasion of the grossest hypocrisy and perjury.

3. Operating as a lure to ungodly, weak, and worldly-minded men to enter her ministry, the wealth of the Established Church has almost totally destroyed her. No wonder the aristocracy oppose church reform. The immense emoluments of the church afforded a very comfortable accommodation to the younger branches of noble families. Multitudes of young gentlemen and noblemen, destitute of talents, learning, and piety; full of pride and ambition; much better qualified for fox-hunting, horse-racing, and gambling, than for preaching —multitudes of these rushing into her sacred offices, as the horse into the battle, professing, at the same time, to be moved by the Holy Ghost, have disgraced the Protestant religion, and brought the Established Church to that precipice, on the very brink of which she at this moment stands trembling.

4. The immense revenues of the Irish church have not only prevented the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and retarded the progress of the Gospel, but they have opened the mouths of blasphemers, and mightily accelerated the progress of Infidelity. Seeing Christian churches

robbing one another, under the pretence of promoting the religion of Jesus Christ!—seeing the professed ambassadors of the lowly Jesus riding in coaches, wallowing in wealth and shining in splendour whilst the poor are starving!—seeing them one day hunting a fox, and the next hunting their own parishioners, and shooting them as dogs for non-payment of tithes!—seeing all this, and other abominations, is it at all strange that many turn Deists, regarding the religion of Jesus Christ as nothing better than priestcraft and imposture?

5. Tithes and royal bounties, but chiefly the former, are, in our opinion, the principal barriers which have prevented the progress of the Reformation in Ireland. To force a Catholic to pay tithes to the Established clergy, and royal bounties to Presbyterian ministers—to ministers of the Synod of Ulster, the Secession Synod, the Antrim Presbytery, the Remonstrant Synod, the Southern Association—to force them to pay Parliamentary grants to the Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland—to force money out of their pockets to pay all these exactions, and all this in order to promote principles which they believe to be damnable; and then, after all, to attempt to proselytize them to the Protestant faith, is one of the most absurd farces ever enacted on the face of this earth. Viewing matters thus, can any man wonder that the Reformation Society was unsuccessful? We only wonder that, under such circumstances, the clergy of the Establishment should have ever dreamed of success, and we wonder still more that the clergy of other churches, who take nothing out of the pockets of Catholics, should have joined with churchmen in so romantic an enterprize. By all these exactions, Catholics regard themselves as robbed. They conceive themselves worse treated, than if forced to pay the menial servants of Protestants. They think they are robbed by Act of Parliament—and for what purpose? For the purpose, as they conceive, of supporting heresy and putting down truth. Under such circumstances, could the Reformation progress? Impossible. Accordingly, we find that while Popery is coming down in Spain and Portugal, it is spreading in Ireland. Tithes and royal bounties have not converted Catholics: tithes and royal bounties cannot convert Catholics: tithes and royal bounties have

confirmed Catholics. So long as these unjust, impolitic, and oppressive exactions are continued, so long will Catholics cling to their religion. No people, while oppressed or persecuted ever were converted, or ever will be converted. Under persecution and oppression, the Jews have clung to their religion eighteen hundred years; but now, when the nations seem disposed to treat them with justice and kindness, we have reason to hope their restoration draws near. The black sons of Africa, whilst oppressed and treated as beasts of burden, have not been converted; but now, when the yoke of oppression is broken from their necks, we have reason to expect the speedy accomplishment of that glorious promise, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God." In like manner, when Protestants cease to oppress Catholics, then, and not till then, have we any reason to expect their spiritual emancipation—then, and not till then, may we expect that the Reformation will progress in Ireland.

6. The continuance of tithes and royal bounties in the present crisis, we conceive most perilous. The consequence, the almost certain consequence, will be the endowment or pensioning of the Catholic priesthood. The enemies of civil and religious liberty are raising the cry of No Popery. They are endeavouring to frighten simple Churchmen, and Dissenters. They are striving to convince us that Prelacy is a barrier between us and Popery; that Prelacy must be kept up and the tithe system supported, and that if we do not support these, Popery will come in and we will be all murdered! Such is the stratagem employed to stop the progress of civil and religious liberty. And we have no doubt, at all, that the stratagem succeeds with many pious weak-minded people. But, if there is such danger, how is it to be *met*? or how is it to be *avoided*? If we had a troublesome neighbour to whom we were indebted, what would we do? Would we not pay him off immediately? In settling our accounts with him, would we not rather pay him a few shillings over, than allow him the slightest pretext for annoying us? Would not this be the dictate of common sense and common prudence? Now, if Catholics are so dangerous neighbours as those alarmists represent them, should not their accusers settle their accounts with them?

Tories are afraid of Papists, and no wonder; they have injured them, and *guilt* begets fear. They are horribly afraid of the persecuting principles of Dens' Theology. But there are other principles which they have more reason to dread; we mean the principles of *retaliation!* For one million of Tories, to try to keep in chains six millions and a half of their fellow-countrymen, who are at this very moment using every effort to burst their fetters, is certainly a very dangerous experiment. Should the appeal which is at present made to reason and justice, be ultimately made to physical force, the shock will be tremendous. The fears of Tories will be more than realized. Our distracted country will become an Aceldama—a field of blood. We again call on Protestants to abandon their exactions, and to settle their accounts with their Catholic fellow-subjects. Catholics profess themselves willing to settle. They say to Protestants, "*Support your own religion, and we will support ours.*" Were this proposal, which was lately made before the House of Commons, acceded to; were matters arranged on this plain principle, there is reason to believe that peace and harmony would be immediately restored, and the endowment of Popery effectually prevented. On the contrary, if Churchmen and Presbyterians refuse to accede to this proposal, the endowment of Popery is almost certain. Indeed it is partly endowed already. Nine thousand pounds per annum is granted to the college of Maynooth! When in the House of Commons this grant was objected to by Protestants, Catholics immediately said, "*Ask nothing from us, and we will ask nothing from you.*" This answer stopped their mouths and the grant was made. Because Protestants and Presbyterians obtain endowments, Maynooth college has been also endowed. On the same principle, because Presbyterians have royal bounties, Catholic priests will probably claim the same. And because the established clergy have tithes and church-lands, the Catholic priesthood will probably claim a share. Nor is it at all impossible, that after some time they will claim a little more, and again a little more, till at last they claim the whole. They will probably reason thus:—"You established the Presbyterian religion in "Scotland, because it was the religion of the majority. "You established the Episcopalian religion in England

"because it was the religion of the majority; and why "not establish the Catholic religion in Ireland because "it is the religion of the majority? You established "it in Canada, and why not in Ireland? Besides, "you gave all the church property in Scotland to the "Presbyterian church, and you gave all the church pro- "perty in England to the Episcopal church, why then "should you refuse to give all the church property in "Ireland to the Catholic church? Have not the Catholics "as good a claim as either the Presbyterians or Episco- "palians? Have they not a better claim? Was not the "principal part of the church property originally theirs? "And was it not wrested from them at the time of the "Reformation?" In this way Catholics will probably reason, and with what success, God only knows. A Popish ascendancy is prophesied by the enemies of civil and religious liberty; and they themselves are doing every thing in their power to fulfil their own predictions. If they really dread a Popish ascendancy we can tell them how they can prevent it. Let them give up their emoluments. *In this divided country,* let every denomination of Christians support their own clergy. All ground of complaint being thus removed, were Catholics to agitate for endowment or ascendancy, Protestants of every denomination, and in every department of the British empire, would unite their efforts in resisting their claims, and in putting them down. Should the Catholic clergy be endowed or pensioned, or should they obtain an ascendancy in Ireland, tithes and royal bounties will be the principal causes of the disaster. Those who refuse to accede to the proposal, that every denomination should support their own clergy, will be justly chargeable with all the evil consequences of such an event. Oh that they were wise!—that they would seriously consider the responsibility they incur! The Catholic clergy have hitherto refused royal bounties; whether they will continue to refuse them, if again offered, time will soon tell. Anticipating the worst, we have raised our warning voice, and pointed out the means by which, under Providence, the danger may be evaded. We have pointed out the way—in our apprehension the only way—by which an escape can be reasonably expected.

7. Tithes and royal bounties have divided the inhabit-

ants of this island into castes, and excited mutual jealousies. Tithes have created deadly animosities, and deluged the nation with blood. Those who receive the emoluments of the state, allege that kings should be nursing-fathers to the church. Now, were the father of a family to give nine-tenths of his property to his eldest son, a very small portion to his second son, a still smaller portion to the third, whilst his other sons receive nothing at all, but, on the contrary, are obliged not only to support themselves, but also to toil and labour to make up the portions of their elder brethren, what kind of a nursing-father would he be? Were he to heap clothes on these favourite sons, and muffle them so that they would neither be able to work nor to walk, nor to bear the slightest puff of wind; and were he, for this purpose, to strip the younger children naked, and expose them to all the inclemencies of the weather—what kind of a nursing-father would he be? And were such a father to exhort these children to live in love and peace, could any thing be more absurd or preposterous? Such is the manner in which churches in Ireland have been nursed. The nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers of our churches, have given the tithes and church lands to the Established clergy. To the Synod of Ulster, the Remonstrant Synod, the Antrim Presbytery, and Southern Association, they have given a Regium Donum, a mere pittance, compared with the emoluments of the Established Church; and to the Secession Synod they have given a still smaller Bounty. These three classes of clergy are regarded as occupying three different grades or ranks in society. The Established clergy occupy a higher rank in society than the Synod of Ulster; the Synod of Ulster occupies a higher rank than the Secession Synod; and the Secession Synod are a grade higher than those who are outcasts, who receive none of the emoluments of the state. In this way have invidious distinctions been created—created by what? by filthy lucre! The order of nature is frequently inverted. Ministers, eminent for talents, learning, piety, and activity, are frequently treated with insolence and contempt, by those who are, in all these respects, their inferiors—by those who have nothing to recommend them but the emoluments of the state. Bad feelings are thus engendered, jealousies are excited, and

animosities fostered and fanned into flames, threatening to consume and destroy our nation. The emoluments of the state are the golden apples of discord, by which Satan has divided and conquered our country. Till these are removed, religion will never flourish, nor our country enjoy peace.

We know when ever the tithes are touched, the cry is raised, "*The Church is in danger!*" "*The Protestant religion will be destroyed!*" When the members of the Established Church raise this cry, they are virtually saying, "Our church is a creature of the state, and could "not exist were the state to desert her! Our church is "not founded on a rock; she depends for her existence on "acts of parliament! Tithes are the foundation on which "our church is built! If these are withdrawn she will "tumble into ruins! If Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, "Independents, Methodists, Moravians, Quakers, &c., "withdraw their support, she may fall for us! We have "in our hands nine-tenths of the wealth of the nation, but "we will not support her. The Redeemer may depart out "of our coasts! His religion may shift for itself! We "have not so much love to God—we have not so much "love to truth—we have not so much love to the souls of "men—we have not so much love to the Saviour of sin-"ners—we have not so much love to any, or all of these, "as to induce us to support, by free-will offerings, the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God!!! Away with the "Protestant religion! Away with the Christian religion! "Though the means are in our hands we will not support "them!" Such is the interpretative language of those who cry, "The Church is in danger!" "The Protestant religion will be destroyed if the tithes are withdrawn." Was ever such an insult offered to Christianity! or to the Protestant religion! Never. But we do not believe that churchmen are in earnest. We would be sorry to pay them as bad a compliment as they pay themselves, It is doubtless true, that multitudes have flocked into the church for her loaves and fishes, her honours and emoluments, who have not one single particle of religion —who are the very dregs or scum of society. This, however, is not the case with all. There are honourable exceptions. There are many pious and good men in the Established Church, who would sacrifice their last farthing,

rather than suffer the Protestant religion to be banished from our land. To such men we would say, Be not afraid, the abolition of tithes will not hasten the destruction, but the *renovation* of Protestantism. Covenanters are forced to pay tithes for the support of the Established church—they are forced to contribute to the Regium Donum of the Synod of Ulster—they are forced to contribute to the Regium Donum of the Secession Synod—they are forced to contribute to the Regium Donum of the Antrim Presbytery—they are forced to contribute to the Regium Donum of the Remonstrant Synod—they are forced to contribute to the Regium Donum of the Southern Association—they are forced to contribute to the building of churches in England, Ireland, and Scotland—they are forced to contribute to the support of the Catholic college of Maynooth! They are forced to contribute to the support of all these—we say *forced*, for they do not support them voluntarily. We lift our testimony against all these payments. We regard them all as unjust and oppressive. Now, if *poor* Covenanters,* though unjustly and infuriously forced to contribute to the support of all these,

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* Independents, Methodists, Moravians, and all other communities who receive no emoluments from the State, are in the same predicament with Covenanters. All these support their own teachers over and above the exactions we have mentioned. As an apology for receiving the emoluments of the State, the niggardliness of the laity is alleged. But why are the laity so niggardly? Were not the clergy originally to blame? Have not the exorbitant exactions of the ministers of the Churches of Rome, of England, and of Ireland, brought a stigma upon the clergy? Are they not regarded as a kind of gentle robbers? Has not the avarice of the clergy become proverbial? Does not this account in a very considerable degree for the niggardliness of the people? The generosity of the laity has been frozen at its fountain by the all-grasping avarice of the clergy. Prior to the exorbitant demands of the priesthood, the people were so far from being niggardly, that by their liberality they corrupted and almost destroyed the Christian ministry. The extravagant claims of the clergy produced a reaction. In self-defence the laity became niggardly. The consequence is, that the ministers of unendowed churches are suffering for the sins of their fathers; and, by the grace of God, we are willing to suffer. We know that nothing but an imitation of the self-denial of Jesus Christ and his Apostles will rectify those evils of which we complain. Were ministers of the Establishment, and Dissenting ministers, to give up the emoluments of the State, and throw themselves on the generosity of their hearers, they would remove the

are, nevertheless, able to support, and *do* support, their own clergy, *over* and *above*, how absurd to maintain that wealthy churches, if required to support no clergy but their own, could not support these! Surely such churches ought to be ashamed. Whatever men regard as of very little value, they are willing to give very little for it; and surely those churches must regard the *religion of Jesus* as of very little value, when, though perfectly *able* to support it, they candidly acknowledge themselves *unwilling!* Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in Askelon! lest Deists rejoice and Infidels triumph. Tithes are one of the greatest curses Ireland ever saw. They have almost annihilated the Established Church. Every person, therefore, who wishes her well, should wish them abolished, or rather appropriated to national purposes.

8. The emoluments of the state have done much injury to religion, by degrading the ministers of the Gospel into engines of state policy. That the established clergy are creatures of the state, is too evident to require any proof. Were proof necessary, we need only point to that one act of the British legislature, by which ten bishopricks were extinguished at a blow. The established clergy are under the feet of statesmen, who may trample on them at pleasure. And who are these statesmen? Are they all members of the Established church? Not at all. Many of them are Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland—many of them are Dissenters—many of them Roman Catholics, and some perhaps even Deists and Infidels. By some of these legislators the liturgy of the Established church is regarded as Popish, and her hierarchy Antichristian, whilst by others her doctrines are regarded as heretical! If her abhorrence of Popery is sincere, now is the time to show it. Is there nothing of Popery in her liturgy? Is there nothing of Popery in her ceremonies? Is there nothing of Popery in her hierarchy? If her abhorrence of Popery is sincere, let her purge out all the leaven of Popery, and then we will believe her.

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odious stigma of avarice from the Gospel ministry. Like us they might suffer a little for the sins of their predecessors, but the time of suffering would be short—the tide of liberality and public spirit would soon begin to flow—the mouths of infidels would be stopped—and the word of the Lord would have free course and be glorified.

If there is no affinity between her and Popery, what is the reason that she acknowledges the validity of the ordination of a Roman Catholic priest, and denies that of a Dissenting minister? Why does she admit the former without re-ordination, whilst she treats the latter as a layman, and will not admit him to officiate within her pale, unless he submits to be re-ordained. The Established Church of Ireland has been usually denominated the *High Church*, but this is a *gross misnomer*. She is the *Low Church*. There never was a church so low as she is at present. She cries out against Popery and Infidelity, but submits to be trampled on by Infidels and Papists. Infidels and Papists have their feet on her neck at this very moment. We call upon her to emancipate herself from this degrading thraldom. If she has one particle of honourable feeling, let her burst her fetters and assert her indeqendence. Her connexion with the state is illegitimate. Let her break it off immediately. Let her abandon her illicit intercourse with the state, before the state abandons her. Let Episcopalians say, "We will no longer suffer our church to be trampled under foot by statesmen and politicians, by Deists and Papists. We will no longer permit her to commit fornication with the kings of the earth. *We have only one master, even Christ.* He is the only head of our church. *The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our Lawgiver; the Lord is our King, he will save us. O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had the dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.*" Let the Established Church dash the golden cup from her hands. Let her say, in the language of inspiration, "*I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.*"

Royal Bounty is also given to Presbyterian ministers for political purposes. That it was designed to produce loyalty, no man can doubt, and no candid man will deny. Hence an oath of allegiance is required as an indispensible condition of receiving it. The same thing is evident from its classification. To large congregations, who have least need of it, the largest sums are granted; and to small congregations, who have most need, the smallest sums are given. The least is given to those who have most need, and the most to those who have least need.

But the loyalty of a large congregation is of more value than that of a small one; and therefore a larger price is paid for it. On the same principle, ministers of the Secession receive smaller bounties than ministers of the Synod of Ulster. They have more need, but they receive less bounty. And why? The reason is obvious. The Secession Synod is a smaller body than the Synod of Ulster. And every one knows, that it requires less force to put in motion a small body than a large one. A small body of clergy when pensioned by the state, other things being equal, are likely to become more servile than a larger body. A larger body, feeling their own importance, will naturally act more independently. On this principle, a smaller bounty, given to each minister of a small body of clergy, will produce the same loyalty as a larger bounty, given to each minister of a larger body. *

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* Though the tendency of royal bounties, as affecting larger or smaller bodies of men, be such as we have described, we make no invidious comparisons as to the effects they have actually produced. Notwithstanding the natural tendency of royal bounties to produce servility, we are fully convinced there are ministers, both in the Synod of Ulster and Secession Synod—and we trust their number is not small—men of independent minds, warm friends of civil and religious liberty. Some of them have publickly testified both against tithes and Regium Donum; and we have no doubt at all that others would have done the same, had they not been prevented by feeling the inconsistency of testifying against royal bounties, whilst still in the receipt of them. Unitarian ministers, in general, are favourable to civil and religious liberty. Some ministers, also, of the Established Church, in opposition to their own worldly interests, are friendly to the same glorious cause. Nor must we neglect to make honourable mention of those worthy men who have petitioned against tithes and royal bounties. Multitudes, we hope, will soon follow their example. With regard to petitions of an opposite description—petitions for an augmentation of Regium Donum—we would ask those who have signed such petitions, Is it honourable in you—leaving justice out of the question—is it honourable in you to petition parliament for leave to put your hands into our pockets, and into the pockets of our poor hearers? Your congregations are, in general, more than five times as large as ours, and ten times wealthier. Is it honourable in the ministers of these large and wealthy congregations, to look to poor Covenanters for support? or to poor Methodists? or to poor Independents? or to poor Catholics? Is it honourable in these large and wealthy congregations, to permit their ministers to stoop so low? Presbyterians! stand on your feet like men, and say, We are not only *able*, but we are also *willing*, to support our own ministers.

We mean no offence; but the fact is, and it is a deplorable fact, that our legislators have coolly calculated the effects of royal bounties, as a skilful mechanic would calculate the effects of a steam engine—a ten horse power, a twenty horse power, &c. The Secession Synod being a smaller body than the Synod of Ulster, their loyalty is considered of less value to the government; and, therefore, the government have given less for it. That our legislators calculate the influence of royal bounty in producing loyalty, just as mechanics calculate the powers of machinery, is beyond all doubt. In the House of Commons, a few years ago, when the pensioning of the Catholic priesthood was under consideration, one of the members, Denis Brown, Esq., was asked if he thought a pension to the Catholic priesthood would be of any use; he replied in the affirmative, and assigned two reasons: First, his knowledge of human nature, and Second, experience. He said, that in 1798, Presbyterian clergymen were heading on the rebels against his majesty's troops, but Lord Castlereagh gave them a donum, and that ever since they had been quite loyal. He stated what sums he would give to the different orders of the Catholic clergy; and having made the statement, he exclaimed, And then what loyalty! Aye, they would die with loyalty, if they heard such speeches as I heard in the House of Commons last night!

Presbyterian ministers! ministers of Jesus Christ! will you suffer yourselves to be exhibited before the British Parliament as a piece of state machinery! Shall statesmen and politicians laugh at the machinery when put into motion by Regium Donum! and will you not resent the indignity! Fling from you the paltry sums received from

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"*Corrupting bribes*" are every where denounced in the sacred volume. Their evils are pointed out by precept and example—blinding the eyes—perverting the judgment, &c. Royal bounties we can regard in no other light. To tithe-hunting clergy, and to those who receive royal bounties, we respectfully recommend the serious perusal of Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16, "He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure."

government, and throw yourselves on the generosity of your people. Presbyterians of Ireland! will you see your ministers so insulted without resentment! Are you not both able and willing to support them? To exercise a virtual veto over the appointment of Presbyterian ministers, by refusing them a Regium Donum, if they do not swear an oath of allegiance, is a gross insult, offered to the Presbyterian ministry. What! are the Presbyterian ministers less loyal than other subjects of the British empire? The insinuation is an insult to which neither Presbyterians nor their ministers should submit for one moment. Let justice be done to Presbyterians, and to all other denominations of Christians, and the British government have nothing to fear. Presbyterian ministers, *without any bounty*, will be quite as loyal as other subjects.

9. Royal bounties are the main pillars on which the tithe system at present rests. Were these pillars withdrawn, the tithe system would fall immediately. Were Presbyterians to raise their voice against the tithe system —were they to pour in petitions to Parliament against it— the consequence, the inevitable and instantaneous consequence would be the downfall of the system. Catholics are opposing it; were Presbyterians also to oppose it, resistance would be vain. Its fall would be instantaneous. Presbyterians, as well as Catholics, hate the tithe system. Why then do they not oppose it? Why do not the Synod of Ulster, the Secession Synod, the Antrim Presbytery, the Remonstrant Synod, and Southern Association testify against it? The reason is obvious. The royal bounty prevents them. Were any one of these Synods to raise its voice against the tithes, it would immediately hear the contemptuous retort—Physician, heal thyself; give up your own Regium Donum. Its mouth would be thus instantaneously stopped. But this is not all: were tithes abolished, the withdrawal of royal bounties would immediately follow. A conviction of this has doubtless a tendency to reconcile those synods to the continuance of the tithe system; or at least to prevent them from employing any active exertions against it. In proof of the correctness of these observations, we would state one fact which we regard as equal to a thousand arguments. The fact is this: Seceders in Scotland are attacking the *Presbyterian establishment*; whilst in

Ireland they are not attacking the *Episcopal establishment*. The Irish establishment is a thousand times worse than the Scottish establishment, and yet Seceders are not attacking it—they are not attacking it as they are attacking the Scottish establishment. Now, what is the reason? Can any satisfactory reason be assigned but this: *In Ireland, Seceders receive a Regium Donum; in Scotland none?* The conclusion we are forced to draw is this: *That all the evils of tithes, at present, are justly chargeable on royal bounties;* for were there no *royal bounties* there would soon be *no tithes*—there *could* be none.

10. Royal bounties are supporting Arianism. By act of parliament, money is annually extracted from our pockets. For what purpose? For the purpose of preaching down the Supreme Divinity, and atoning blood of the Son of God! Ministers of the Synod of Ulster! ministers of the Secession Synod! it is in your power to prevent this evil! Give up your own bounties, and petition against theirs! Royal bounty is introducing Arian ministers, where they could not otherwise be introduced; and it is supporting Arian ministers, where they could not otherwise be supported. Many Arian congregations are mere skeletons, and could not support a minister at all, were it not for the aid of Regium Donum. Regium Donum enables Arians to create divisions in orthodox congregations, and to set up in them the standard of Arianism. The Synod of Ulster, and the Secession Synod, we humbly conceive are accountable for all this. Were they to receive no royal bounties, Arians would receive none. So long as they receive them, they are indirectly encouraging and supporting Arianism.

11. The Established church in Ireland has corrupted other Protestant churches, by breaking down the walls of their discipline. The Established Church has an open door for all the fugitives from church discipline in other churches. Persons who would not be sustained as regular members in other churches, crowd into the Established Church. Unfortunate females, and other irregular members of Dissenting churches, obtain baptism for their children in the Established Church; and in consequence of this, both they and their children are enrolled as members, though they still regard themselves as Dissenters, and profess themselves to be so. In this way, the Estab-

lished Church has in the late census swelled the number of her members to something more than 800,000. Deducting such characters, and the Methodists which she claims, it is probable her members would not exceed half a million. This is a matter of minor importance. What we complain of and deplore is, that the prostration of discipline in the Established Church has led to a similar prostration in Dissenting churches. Dissenters, when acting disorderly, say to those who are over them in the Lord, "If you "attempt to exercise discipline upon us, we will im- "mediately join the Established Church." Rather than lose wealthy and influential members in this way, ministers of the Synod of Ulster have been tempted to relax their discipline. They have fallen before the temptation. Their discipline over the laity has been almost totally destroyed. On the same principle, lest Seceders guilty of irregularities should go over to the communion of the Synod of Ulster, the Secession Church has been induced to relax her discipline also. Instead of doing good in Ireland, the Established Church has, in this respect, done much evil. The state of church-discipline is truly deplorable. It is a subject of lamentation, mourning, and wo.

12. In reviewing the preceding particulars, we cannot help deploring the evils flowing from an unscriptural connexion between Church and State; nor can we help raising a loud testimony against the absurdity and wickedness of establishing different and opposite religions in the same great empire. How absurd—how sinful to establish Prelacy in England and Ireland, Presbytery in Scotland, and Popery in Canada! If Presbytery be right, Prelacy is wrong. On the contrary, if Prelacy be right, Presbytery must be wrong. And if Protestantism be right, Popery must be wrong: or, if Popery be right, Protestantism must be wrong. They cannot be all right. If the British Monarch believes Prelacy to be right, how absurd—how cruel—how sinful to force him to swear to support Presbytery and Popery, systems so opposite to each other, and both of which he believes to be wrong! When measures of reform are proposed, Tories raise a hideous cry about the king's conscience and coronation oath. Good, pious souls, how conscientious they are! But there is not one word of all this when

snares are laid for the king's conscience, by forcing him to swear to support opposite and contradictory systems! Scottish Presbyterians sit down with Episcopalians in the same Parliament, and assist them in establishing Prelacy, a form of church government which they had sworn to extirpate, whilst Episcopalians, on the contrary, assist Presbyterians in establishing Presbytery, which they heartily detest. And then—What then? These two classes of Protestants sit down and establish Popery in the Colonies! Yes—Popery! Popery, which they had previously sworn to be blasphemous and idolatrous! What can be the state either of religion or morality in such an empire as this, where consistency, conscience, moral principle, and truth are so shamefully violated!—And violated by whom? By the rulers of the nation! When such an example is exhibited by the nobles and rulers of a country, what profligacy of morals may be reasonably expected among the lower classes? Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Some may think that it would be wise to pay the clergy of all denominations out of the treasury. We think it not at all improbable, that the present movements may terminate in this. Fearing this issue, we must raise our warning voice against it. And we do so for two reasons. First, it would destroy civil liberty. Second, it would be dishonourable to God, and ruinous to religion. If all the clergy of the empire, and particularly the Catholic clergy, were pensioned, then adieu to civil liberty. But this is not all. Its influence on the interests of truth and godliness would be still more deplorable. Could any thing be conceived more absurd, than for the government of a country to pay one class of men for propagating truth, and another class of men for propagating error! To pay one class of men for building up a certain system, and another class of men for pulling it down! To pay one class of men for propagating the Protestant religion in Ireland, and another class of men for rooting it out! To pay one class of men for preaching up faith in the supreme Divinity and atoning blood of Jesus Christ, as the only way by which we can be saved; and another class of men for preaching down that Divinity and atoning blood! To pay one class of teachers for

endeavouring to *save*: and another for *destroying* the souls of men! It would be much less absurd, and much more innocent, to pay one class of men for digging holes in the sand, and another class of men for filling them up! To pay the clergy of all sects and denominations, goes upon the principle, that truth and error are equally calculated to promote the morality, and consequently the prosperity, of a nation. Now, nothing can be more erroneous than this. Sanctify them by thy *truth*, says the Saviour; but we no where read of sanctification by error. Truth sanctifies, and renders men moral; but error demoralizes and destroys. To pay men for preaching error, is to pay them for demoralizing and destroying a nation. It is setting the seal of national authority to this monstrous absurdity—that error and heresy, blasphemy and idolatry, are quite as favourable to the prosperity of a nation as *truth!* Against such a system we must lift our voice. As watchmen on the walls of Zion, when such dangers threaten us we must sound an alarm. We pray to God that our fears may prove groundless; but, should they be realised, this document will prove that we have done our duty, in giving faithful warning.

In the preceding pages, we have lifted our voice against tyranny and oppression. As our authority for this, we would quote a few portions of the sacred volume. The first chapter of Isaiah, we recommend to the serious perusal of our readers and our flocks, and particularly the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In these words we are enjoined to seek judgment; to relieve the oppressed; to judge the fatherless; to plead for the widow. Were ever words more appropriate than these? The great mass of our population, particularly our Catholic fellow-subjects, have been long groaning under great oppression. Catholics, particularly in the South of Ireland, are oppressed, Firstly, by their own priesthood. Secondly, by the hierarchy of the Established Church, and

Thirdly, by cruel absentee landlords. Under this threefold oppression, their situation is truly deplorable. The condition of African slaves is, in some respects, enviable, compared with theirs. Their widows houses are devoured, and their fatherless children butchered before their eyes. Let us judge the fatherless. Let us plead for the widow. Let us do every thing in our power to relieve the oppressed. If we can do nothing else, let us testify against oppression. Let us confess it before God, and pray that he would be the "*helper of the fatherless*" --that he would plead the cause of the oppressed—that he would hear their cry, and come down to deliver them. Ahab appointed a fast when he was about to rob Naboth of his vineyard. The Jews fasted when they were about to smite with the fist of wickedness. The iniquity of such fasts is pointed out in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, from the beginning to the eighth verse. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh." Fasts were lately appointed, previous to the third centenary of the Reformation. Were they such fasts as the Lord hath chosen? Were those who observed them, fasting because they were in danger of losing their tithes? Or were they fasting because the Reformation has made so little progress in Ireland? If the latter was the cause, let them remove those obstructions which impede the Reformation. Let them undo the heavy burdens; let them suffer the oppressed to go free; and let them break every yoke—the yokes of tithes, government grants, &c. Episcopalians are anxious to break the yoke of Popery. They represent it as a galling yoke, an intolerable yoke, destructive and ruinous to the souls of men. But who have rivetted this yoke on the neck of Catholics? *Episcopalians themselves!* When the apostle Paul entered Athens, his spirit was moved because he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. And can we, as ministers and elders in the church of Christ, look around us and see more than six millions of human beings wholly given to idola-

try, and not feel our spirits moved within us? Can we see these millions, age after age, passing into the invisible world, without feeling deeply affected? Can we view those barriers which tithes have raised, preventing the conversion of these immortal souls, and not feel deeply indignant! Protestant watchmen! if these souls perish, will not their blood be required of your hands? By your oppressive exactions, you have rivetted the prejudices of your Catholic fellow-subjects. You have blocked up every avenue to their consciences and their hearts. Your cry of No Popery, whilst you exact the tithes, only tends to exasperate them. Your attempts to convert them, they laugh to scorn. Do not deceive yourselves. The language of their feelings is this:—"What! "do you mean to rob us, and then convert us! Do you "mean to plunder us, and then proselytise us! Prose-"lyte us to what? To the Protestant religion? No! "A religion which teaches you to rob and oppress, can-"not be the true religion. We want to know nothing "about your religion; we know too much about it." Such are the feelings of Catholics, and such will be their feelings whilst the tithe system continues. Ministers of the Establishment! if you wish to break the yoke of Popery—if you wish to save the souls of Catholics (and you profess both)—give up your tithes! Till once you do this, allow us to assure you, that Catholics will think and firmly believe, nothwithstanding all your professions to the contrary, that your love to the tithes is much stronger than your love to their souls.

Before concluding this document, we would caution our flocks not to suppose that because we have pointed out the evils of other communities, we think our own perfect. We do, indeed, think it nearer perfection than any other church. If we did not think so, we could not in conscience continue in its fellowship. But though we conceive it nearer perfection, we abhor the idea that it is either perfect now, or that it was perfect at the time of the purest reformation. We abhor the doctrine that any *man* lives without sin, and is perfect in this life; still more do we abhor the idea that any *church* is perfect. Every *man* is fallible, sinful, and imperfect; and so is every *church*. A church is composed of individuals. Now, if the individuals of which the church is composed

are imperfect, the church itself must be imperfect. A multitude of imperfects cannot make a perfect, a multitude of fallibles cannot make an infallible. The *holiest man* must say, if he says the truth, "I have not already attained, nor am I already perfect;" and the *purest church* must say the same thing. For the last hundred and fifty years what have we been doing? What progress have we made? We claim kindred with the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century; but are *we ourselves* reformers? *They* did much; what have *we* done? *They* reformed much; what have *we* reformed? Do we manifest the same *spirit* which they manifested? The same *piety?* the same *zeal?* the same *spirit of inquiry?* In all these respects have we not rather retrograded than advanced? Were our reforming forefathers now on earth, have we not reason to fear that they would not acknowledge us? The Reformed churches reviewed their creeds frequently; some of them every year; they altered their creeds; they amended their creeds. Their Presbyteries met monthly and held public discussions. Do we follow their example. Do we not rather act on the principle that the reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century did *every thing*, and, of course, left nothing for *us* to do.* Some look down with contempt on their forefathers. They feel a pride in rejecting their opinions. They foolishly imagine that by rejecting those opinions, they are proving themselves to be men of liberal, enlightened, and independent minds, free from the trammels of bigotry, capable of thinking for themselves. Such feelings and sentiments have done much mischief. But, whilst we guard against this extreme, we ought to beware of running to its opposite. Nothing can be more dangerous; nothing more injurious, than the vain idea that either an individual or a church has arrived at perfection. It puts an extinguisher on all reformation. The first reformation was a glorious reformation—the second far excelled it, but a third is approaching more glorious than both. The former reformations may be compared to the light of the moon; the approaching reformation to the light of the sun. The former reformations may be com-

* We are happy to state that *our brethren in Scotland* have made some improvements, and at this very moment are making improvements. May the Lord grant them abundant success.

pared to the light of *one* day, but the glory of the approaching reformation to the light of *seven days in one.* We thus compare them, because they are so compared in the sacred volume. If we would wish our weak instrumentality blessed for the hastening of this glorious day, we must not stand still. Our message from God to our beloved hearers is, "Speak unto the people that they go forward." On a day of humiliation and fasting, we have reason to take shame and confusion of face to ourselves, that whilst our illustrious reformers did so much, we have done so little—whilst they advanced forward, we have stood still, or rather retrograded. They dug in the field of the Gospel; they explored the treasures of truth; they cried after knowledge; they lifted up their voice for understanding; they sought her as silver, and searched for her as for hid treasures. Their exertions were indefatigable, and their success abundant. Their labours are a reproach to us; compared with ours, they are well calculated to humble us to the dust. Our opportunities for exploring the treasures of truth, are immensely superior to theirs; but our activity and success, immensely inferior. Besides the gold and silver now in circulation, inexhaustible mines are still unexplored. Ignorant of their existence, we may be trampling upon them, whilst in ages to come they may be discovered, and their contents may enrich future generations. Just so with the sacred oracles. Their contents are yet very imperfectly understood. The little progress made in Scriptural exegesis, is truly deplorable; and yet we fold our hands, as if all the treasures of truth were explored, and nothing remained for us to do but to sit down in ease and indolence. It is matter of deep regret, that whilst we ought to unite our efforts, and strain every nerve in carrying forward the work of reformation so auspiciously commenced by our venerable ancestors, a spirit of division threatens to weaken our hands and paralyse our exertions. Our sister Synod, in America, a body of devoted men, whose labours in propagating reformation principles the Redeemer had crowned with remarkable success—this comparatively large and influential body is rent asunder by the spirit of division. This mournful event would of itself, were there no other causes, be a sufficient reason for appointing a day of public fasting. "For the divisions

of Reuben there were great searchings of heart." May the Lord pour upon Covenanters, and every other community of Christians, a spirit of grace and of supplication! May threatened judgments be averted from our nation — may the heart of the fathers be turned to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, before the earth be smitten with a curse.

CAUSES OF THANKSGIVING.

The preceding pages, like Ezekiel's roll, are filled with lamentation, mourning, and wo. We come now to a more agreeable part of our task, to point out causes of *gratitude*, *thanksgiving*, and *praise*. A wide field here opens to our view; but at present we shall only advert to a few things connected with the changes which are passing before us — changes in *the church*, and changes in *the state*.

I. *In the church* we see the dawn of a glorious reformation. It is not merely the Church of Rome, but the Reformed churches, also, that need to be reformed. We are confident this reform has already commenced, and the commencement of it is a cause of thanksgiving. In what we have written of neighbouring churches, we have only presented the dark side of the picture; to the bright side, now, we would turn the attention of our flocks and our readers.

1. The Established Church of England and of Ireland, is one of the churches of the Reformation. Her doctrinal articles and homilies we regard as Calvinistic. Many of her ministers have been burning and shining lights in the world. Her Latimers, her Ridleys, her Hoopers, her Halls, and her Leightons, are names which will be held in everlasting remembrance. In more modern times, her Hornes, her Romaines, her Herveys, her Newtons, and her Scotts, have laid the Christian world under deep obligations. During fifty years past, the progress of evangelical principles, within the pale of the Establishment, has been very encouraging. The number of her learned, and talented, and pious, and evangelical ministers, is every day increasing; whilst practical godliness,

particularly among the higher classes of her members, has experienced of late a very considerable revival. We trust her Home Mission will prove the commencement of a new era. Her clergy are not now confining their labours within the walls of consecrated churches. They are lengthening their cords and strengthening their stakes. They are breaking forth on every side. They are preaching the Gospel in school-houses and barns. In all these things we sincerely rejoice. We regard them as just causes of gratitude.

2. In the Synod of Ulster, the work of reformation has, for some time past, been rapidly progressing. The progress, indeed, has been so rapid, that if we did not see it with our eyes we could scarcely believe it. The ministers of that Synod, we speak in general terms, are very different men, indeed, from those who composed it forty or fifty years ago. In making this observation, we wish to be understood as referring not only to their orthodoxy, but also to their piety, their learning, their zeal, and activity. In the success of our Presbyterian brethren in building up the wall of doctrine—in the noble stand they have made for truth—in their recent return to their ancient principles, particularly as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith—we sincerely rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. In mentioning the steps taken by the Synod of Ulster to carry forward a work of reformation, we cannot pass in silence their petition to Parliament against book-swearing. From that most absurd, unscriptural, and superstitious mode of swearing, by touching and kissing a book, our Presbyterian brethren, we have no doubt at all, will soon be delivered. We hope soon to see Presbyterians, in general, worshipping God in this solemn ordinance "according to the pattern shown them in the mount," by "*lifting up their hands to the Most High God, the creator of heaven and earth.*" In the praiseworthy exertions of those members of the Synod of Ulster who are straining every nerve to have family worship introduced, praying societies established, and greater purity of communion observed, we sincerely rejoice. Our hearts are knit to those pious and good men. And we pray that God would pour out upon them his Spirit from on high, and enable them to go on with the work of reformation, and to build those walls which require to be

repaired—the walls of worship, discipline, and government. The repairing of these walls will require much zeal, self-denial, and perseverance. May the Lord qualify them for the arduous task, and crown their exertions with abundant success. The efforts made by our Presbyterian brethren in carrying on a work of reformation, and the extraordinary success which has hitherto attended these efforts, we regard as causes of thanksgiving and joy.

3. Our brethren of the Secession made a noble stand against patronage in Scotland. They stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and refused to be entangled by a yoke of bondage. Their testimony was not lifted in vain. The Church of Scotland, principally, we presume, through the influence of the Secession, feels herself constrained to retrace her steps. She seems ready to cast off the galling yoke of patronage. Our Seceding brethren have also made a noble stand in defence of sound doctrine. Nor have their labours been in vain in the Lord. In both Scotland and Ireland their exertions have been blessed in stemming the tide of Arminian, Arian, and Socinian errors. In opposition to these, their zeal for truth hath provoked very many. Their labours and success are motives to gratitude, and causes of thanksgiving.

4. The course of education employed in training up candidates for the ministry, is matter of gratitude and praise. We have now the benefit of a home education; and the Synod of Ulster, the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, seem to vie with each other in training up students for the ministry. A strict, an unremitting, an unexampled attention is paid to their religious principles, to their moral conduct, and to their progress in literature. The study of the Hebrew language, so necessary for understanding the Old Testament Scriptures, had, for centuries past, been shamefully neglected; but now, we are happy to say, it is becoming an object of particular attention. By the Synod of Ulster and Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, professors of Biblical Criticism have been appointed, an arrangement which we hail with joy; we regard it as of great and paramount importance. The study, also, of the Irish language, we trust, will be attended with the happiest results. Such a holy rivalry among sister Synods, we re-

gard as the commencement of a happier era, and is no mean cause of thanksgiving and praise.

5. Both Prelacy and Popery appear to be coming down; they are destroying each other, and this we regard as a cause of thanksgiving. When we rejoice in the downfall of Popery and Prelacy, we wish no ill to Catholics or Episcopalians—on the contrary, we love them. We love their persons, but we hate their errors. If we love men, we must hate what injures them. Now, because Popery injures Catholics, we hate it, and because Prelacy injures Episcopalians, we hate it. The great parliamentary orator Fox, in his beautiful panegyric, on the noble martyr, the Duke of Argyle, regrets that the Duke in his last moments said, "I die with a heart hatred of Popery." Now this sentiment to which Fox objects, we regard as a sentiment quite worthy of a martyr. Had he said, "I die with a heart hatred of Papists;" this would have been horrid. It would have been an indelible blot on that illustrious character. But he loved Catholics, he loved mankind; and, therefore, he died with a heart hatred of what he supposed most calculated to injure them. On this principle, we hate both Popery and Prelacy, and rejoice in the prospect of their approaching dissolution. Popery is coming down in Spain and Portugal. In Prussia and Spain, &c. it is said that three thousand monasteries have been lately suppressed. The church property confiscated in Spain alone, is said to amount to nine millions sterling. The attack made on Prelacy, at the very same time, is a curious coincidence. Ten bishoprics abolished at once, and a bill brought in, which, though lately rejected, will in all probability very shortly pass—a bill for the sequestration of 860 parishes!—*sinecure* parishes from which much money was extorted for doing just nothing. Though Popery, in one respect, seems to progress in Ireland; in other respects, we believe it to be declining. In civil matters, the Pope's authority is despised, and his rescripts contemned. Though an old Catholic writer, Peter Dens, maintains that because heresy and idolatry were punished by the civil magistrate under the Jewish dispensation, they ought to be so punished still; Catholics are now ashamed of such persecuting principles. They deny and abjure them. The long period they spent in

the school of persecution, has taught them we trust some useful lessons. The position in which they at present stand, fighting the battles of civil and religious liberty, is certainly well calculated to erradicate persecuting principles, and to inoculate them with principles of liberality and charity. We cannot but admire both the wisdom and goodness of God in putting them into such a position, at the very same time that he is putting the sacred oracles into their hands, and that these holy Scriptures are making rapid progress among them. That the breath of God's mouth, and the brightness of his coming, are at present bringing down Antichristian systems, we have reason to believe, and we regard this as matter of praise and thanksgiving.

II. The political changes which are passing before us furnish us with causes of gratitude to God. In the state, as well as in the church, there are evils to deplore: to some of these we have adverted in our causes of fasting. Whilst we lament these evils and testify against them, we have reason to bless God that the prospect is brightening. In some of those changes which have lately taken place, there is an evident improvement.

1. The reform lately effected in the House of Representatives, we regard as a measure of great importance. The disfranchisement of rotten boroughs, and the extension of the elective franchise to the inhabitants of large towns, are great improvements. Prior to these changes, the House of Representatives was a complete misnomer. We had *no* representation, or only a *mock* representation. The members of the House of Commons were only the nominees or the tools of the House of Lords. They were not the representatives of the nation, but only of the aristocracy. They represented not the people but themselves and their friends. They bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders, but they themselves would scarcely move them with one of their fingers. They enriched themselves and their families, but impoverished the nation, and reduced it nearly to a state of bankruptcy. After a cruel expenditure of blood and treasure, they left the empire plunged into debt—a debt so enormous, that it is very doubtful indeed whether the united efforts of the nation will ever be able to discharge it. In so far as the reform

bill is calculated to deliver us from such a state of things, we regard it as a great national blessing worthy of a grateful commemoration.

2. The abolition of slavery is another great blessing for which we should praise God on a day of public thanksgiving. It is quite a common thing to hear men say, "*We do not see the benefit of the reform bill. We see little good a reformed parliament have done.*" What! Is the emancipation of hundreds of thousands of slaves no benefit? To put a stop to the infamous traffic in human flesh—is this no good? The cries of the oppressed Africans torn from the embraces of their families, and bleeding under the lash of the relentless slave driver, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth: he has heard their groanings: he has come down and delivered them! Is this no blessing? When the Father of mercies has put it into the heart of a Reformed Parliament to break the yoke of bondage from the necks of these slaves, we hope the time is near when they shall enjoy a more glorious emancipation—when the Son shall make them free—when he shall deliver them from their spiritual thraldom, and bring them into the glorious liberty of his children. For such a consummation, we fervently pray, "May the Lord hasten it in his time."

3. The abolition of church rates, or church cess, is matter of gratitude. This impost was one of the most unreasonable and odious. One should think that Episcopalians, whose clergy were supported by the nation, would have been willing to pay the church rates themselves—that they would have been willing to pay for the sweeping of their churches, for the washing of the surplices of their clergy; or, at least, that they would have been willing to pay for the sacramental elements of bread and wine. But we regret to say that this was not the case. Money was extorted from poor Catholics and poor Dissenters to enable noble lords, earls, and dukes to commemorate the dying love of him, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich! This certainly was a most flagrant insult to the Christian religion, and to its blessed Author. The impost was a disgrace to the Established Church, and we have no doubt at all that every right-hearted Episcopalian will rejoice with us, that so foul a blot is

removed—that a Reformed Parliament has abolished the evil.

4. The repeal of the Test Act is another ground of gratitude. By this act, Dissenters were excluded from places of power and trust, unless they conformed to the rites and ceremonies of the Episcopal Church. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was, by the Test Act, made a passport to preferment. To qualify them for civil and military offices, men of no religion, wicked and profligate characters, were tempted to profane that holy ordinance; they were tempted to eat and drink judgment to themselves! This was certainly a national sin, calculated to draw down national judgments. That so horrid a prostitution of things sacred is now abolished, must be matter of thanksgiving to every pious mind.

5. In the enumeration of improvements, we must not omit Corporation Reform. This reform, it is true, has only been effected in England and Scotland; but there is no reason to doubt that in our own native country the same privilege will be shortly enjoyed. The inhabitants of corporations, or corporation towns, can best appreciate the benefit of such a measure. Self-elected men having the management of corporation property, and being accountable to none for the discharge of such a trust, the grossest abuses, as might have been expected, were in many cases practised with impunity. The public were robbed by a few individuals, who, instead of consulting the interest of the community, were only careful to enrich and aggrandize themselves and their families. Corporations were originally designed for the protection of life and liberty; but so far were they perverted from their original intention, that they were become quite dangerous to the liberties of the nation, by their influence in returning to Parliament members who were enemies to all improvement and reform. Every friend of his country should thank the Disposer of all events, for putting into the heart of a reformed Parliament to labour so faithfully in attempting to remedy such evils, and reform such abuses.

6. The breaking down of monopolies is another great improvement. The monopoly of the East India Company was a national grievance. A Reformed Parliament

has removed it, and opened the trade to China. In this we rejoice, as the dawn of a new era in the history of commerce. During Tory misrule, monopolies were the order of the day. The British empire, as far as in her power, endeavoured to monopolize the merchandize of the world. By her powerful fleets she took possession of the seas, and acted as if she were mistress of the ocean. To the extent of her power, she domineered over the nations of the earth—she crippled their commerce—she robbed them and plundered them, and frequently shed their blood in cruel wars of aggression. Such conduct was calculated to provoke the Almighty, and to draw down his vengeance upon our guilty empire. We regard it as a ground of thanksgiving to God, that the eyes of our legislators have at last been opened—that they now seem to see not only the *injustice* and *cruelty*, but also the *impolicy* of such a system. They seem now to be sensible of the iniquity of attempting, through the medium of monopolies, to enrich one class at the expense of another. They now see the injustice and the folly of attempting to advance the interests of agriculture, by depressing those of manufactures or commerce; or of raising the latter on the ruins of the former. They seem to be aware that the prosperity of the one is calculated not to injure but to promote the interests of all, and that when one department suffers, all must suffer with it. They are sensible also that the interests of nations are so interwoven, that the flourishing of each is the interest of all. The principle of free trade seems to be recognized—a principle which, when fully brought into action, will greatly promote the wealth and prosperity of nations and empires. In a word, our legislators seem to be convinced that justice should prevail between church and church, and between nation and nation, as well as between man and man.

7. *Reform*, *retrenchment*, and *peace*, are the great objects which the present administration propose to prosecute. That the Sovereign Disposer of all events has put into the heart of the present ministry to prosecute such objects, we regard as matter of thanksgiving and praise. Few objects are of greater importance. The first object is *reform*. Now what object is more important than this? The necessity of it is so obvious, that even Tories them-

selves are forced to admit it—they are not only forced to admit the necessity of reform, but they are forced to profess themselves *reformers*. In this we may see a remarkable fulfilment of the divine prediction. Psalm lxvi. 3—"Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee." In the original it is "Shall *lie* unto thee." The enemies of civil and religious liberty are forced to make *lying* and *hypocritical* professions of their attachment to reform. We say *hypocritical*, for they resist almost every measure of reform till they find resistance unavailing. They only yield to physical force—to the pressure from without, as they call it; whilst those who hold the reins at present seem willing to bow to the voice of reason. They admit that the reform bill is only useful as a means to an end. Parliamentary reform is only useful as it enables the legislature to effect *other* reforms. They have by the assistance of this powerful lever done something, and they profess themselves willing to do more; nay, we see them straining every nerve to do more, and this we regard as a ground of thankfulness.

Retrenchment and *economy* are other great objects which the present ministry profess to pursue. The profligate expenditure of public money, and the consequent oppression of the people, by enormous taxation, were just causes of national complaint. They were evils which loudly called for redress. The present ministry acknowledge these evils. They have already done *something* in order to redress them. They have lightened the public burdens to a certain extent. They have deducted from them several millions annually. They seem also disposed to relieve the lower classes of society, by shifting the public burdens from the poor, and transferring them to the rich. These are beginnings which augur well. They open a prospect of improvement which demands our gratitude.

Peace is the last, but not the least of the objects proposed by the present ministry. During the reign of Toryism, *war* was the order of the day. Many hundreds of millions of debt were contracted, and oceans of blood shed—for what purpose? for the purpose of crushing the liberties of our friends and brethren on the Continent of America; and for the purpose of supporting the tottering cause of tyranny and despotism, on the Continent of Europe! Tories are raising the cry of "*No Popery!*"

but, alas! where was this cry when our armies were fighting the battles of Popery on the Continent? Where was this cry when our blood and treasure was expended for the purpose of setting up the *Pope* and the *Spanish Inquisition!* Tories were then as mute as fishes, and, were it not for the danger of losing the "*golden cup*," we have reason to fear they would be quite as mute still.*

We have reason to thank God that the *war* system is abandoned; and that a system quite different—"*the non-interference system*"—has been happily substituted. Were private families to interfere with each other in all their domestic disputes, what would be the state of society? Would not jarring and discord, broils and animosities, become universal? Would not the fire of contention, like the flames of a universal conflagration, consume all

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* Tories raise the hue and cry against Popery. They profess a dreadful abhorrence of the system. Of their sincerity, however, we have just reason to doubt, when we consider that this abhorrence never rises in their breasts till the loaves and fishes are in danger. So little faith have we in such professions, that we would not think it strange to see these very Tories shaking hands with Popery. We suspect very much, that at this very moment they would be quite willing to compromise the matter with the Church of Rome. Their abhorrence of Popery is not so great, as to prevent them from pensioning Popish priests. Were the scarlet lady, as they call her, to enter into recognizance not to demand back the golden cup snatched from her at the time of the Reformation, they would engage to settle upon her an annual pension. That there is no breach of charity in these observations, is evident from this, that the most talented Tory Newspaper in the empire is, at this very moment, advocating the pensioning of the Catholic clergy. But then, Tories say that they will pension Popery, not for the purpose of supporting it, but of bringing it down. The priests, they allege, will become independent of their people, and consequently will lose their influence over them, and in this way they contend that Popery will be destroyed. Let us examine this for a moment. Popery, they allege, is blasphemous and idolatrous. The idolater is a man who sets up a rival in the throne of the Almighty. And these pious souls would give men pensions for blaspheming the God that made them!—for doing every thing in their power to depose the Almighty!—for plucking the sceptre from his hand, the crown from his head, and for setting up a rival in the throne of the living God! They would do all this evil, that good might come! And these are the men that abhor Popery! Alas! to what extremes does Satan drive mortals! First, he tempts them to *persecute* Papists, and then he tempts them to *pension* Papists! In either case, his purpose is served, and his kingdom promoted. We lift our testimony against both. We denounce both as equally abominable.

before it? That the adoption of the "*non-interference system*," in the intercourse of private families, has prevented much evil and done much good, no person can deny; nor can it be doubted that, in the intercourse of *nations*, the operation of this principle will be equally beneficial. Nations are only families on a larger scale; and it is equally absurd in nations, as in families, to interfere in the internal arrangements of each other. To cultivate friendship, and to live in peace, is not only the duty, but the interest of both. That the rulers of our nation have not only been brought to see the propriety of such a principle, but that they have been enabled to reduce it to practice, is matter of thanksgiving. An astonishing change has taken place. The wealth of the empire was formerly wasted in cruel wars, in which the blood of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, was shed like water, but now that wealth is flowing in a different channel; it is employed in building bridges, in cutting canals, in making rail-ways, in building harbours, in facilitating the progress of agriculture and commerce. This we regard as a great moral revolution. In commemoration of it a jubilee should be kept. A day should be appointed for national thanksgiving. Were the nations in general to imitate the example, swords would soon be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; the wolf would lie down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid; there would be none to hurt or annoy in all the holy mountain of the Lord.

To the causes of thanksgiving specified above, we may add one more—that all the improvements enumerated have been effected, not by the force of arms, but by the force of truth. These victories obtained, are bloodless victories. Under the providence of God, free discussion has accomplished the whole.

We would suggest an additional consideration, calculated to enhance the value of the improvements we have mentioned—a consideration calculated to excite our gratitude and to accent our praises—we refer to the instruments employed in effecting these improvements. Many pious and good men, we have reason to believe, are at this very moment disposed to deny that any good has been done. And why do they deny it? Because Deists and Papists have been employed in effecting it. Now

we would entreat these pious and good men to read over the preceding articles. We would entreat them to meditate and reflect on these articles. And after meditation and reflection, we would ask them, Do you think the things mentioned are good things? Do you think they are worthy of thanksgiving? For instance, do you think the abolition of slavery is a good thing? If you acknowledge it to be good, then, we ask you, is it any thing worse because Deists and Papists were employed in procuring it? Are you under less obligations to Almighty God, because he employed such instruments? Will you tell your Maker, that if he had employed Covenanters, Seceders, or Orthodox Presbyterians, you would have thanked him; but because he has employed Infidels and Papists, you feel yonrselves under no obligations? No; you will spurn the idea. You will see plainly that your obligations are *enhanced* by the employment of those instruments. Had such instruments as you suppose *most fit*, been employed, and particularly had *yourselves* been employed, instead of ascribing the glory to God, you might have felt disposed to sacrifice to your own net and to burn incense to your own drag. But in these divine arrangements to which you object, the sovereign disposer of all events is "staining the pride of all human glory," and affording abundant evidence, that the excellency of the power is of God and not of men.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Covenanters and Puritans were left alone to advocate the cause of civil and religious liberty. Episcopalians, and Infidels, and Papists were all marshalled against them. If God has turned the hearts of some of these opponents, is not this a ground of gratitude? Because the cause of civil and religious liberty has fewer enemies now than it had then, and because many who were then its enemies are now its friends, should we therefore abandon that glorious cause? God forbid. Should we not rather thank God, and take courage?

By extraordinary inventions and improvements in machinery, the Father of Mercies is removing the curse, *that man should eat bread in the sweat of his face*—he is delivering the inferior animals from the bondage of corruption, and bringing them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. By the almost miraculous rapidity of

steam-coaches, he is greatly accelerating the progress of improvement in agriculture, in manufactures, in commerce, in civilization; and, what is of infinitely greater importance, he is affording amazing facilities for the progress of the Gospel. In accordance with all this, by a grand system of *moral* machinery—by Infant Schools, by Sabbath Schools, by Bible Societies, by Missionary Societies, and by a thousand other kindred institutions—the Father of Lights is pouring upon his benighted offspring, the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of his Son Jesus Christ;—he is subverting the kingdom of Satan, and establishing on its ruins the kingdom of his dear Son. Whilst with astonishment we contemplate these things, let our eye affect our heart—let songs of praise, like clouds of incense, ascend to heaven—let us fervently join in the angels' anthem, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men!

In concluding, we would remind our flocks and our readers, that the Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving exhibited in this document, are only to be regarded as a supplement to those published on former occasions. They are designed to prevent misconceptions with regard to the events that are passing before us. They are designed as a testimony against public evils, and a warning against public dangers. In them, we have endeavoured to present not only the dark side of the cloud, but also the bright side. We have endeavoured to point out some of the abominations committed in our land, which call for humiliation and fasting; we have also endeavoured to exhibit a few of those improvements for which we should be thankful. In both cases, we have endeavoured to select those particulars which might have escaped common observation. We conceived it more useful to explain and illustrate a few difficult points, than to specify a great variety which are of themselves plain and obvious. As we have pointed out various improvements both in Church and State, we would finally suggest, that reform, like charity, should begin at home. The Jews in repairing the walls of Jerusalem built every one opposite to his own house. Covenanters! we would ask you as in the presence of God, has the work of reform commenced in your hearts? Have old things passed away, and are all things become new? Are you carrying reform into

your families? Have you formed the resolution that both you and your houses will serve the Lord? Are you [illegible] to promote reform in your social meetings? —in [illegible] circles in which you move?—and in [illegible] congregations of which you are members? [illegible] shown you that some neighbouring churches are [illegible] ing. Now, if Covenanters stand still whilst these churches are going forward, it requires no [illegible] of prophecy to predict the [illegible]. The last will be [illegible] and the first will be last. [illegible] be doing, and may the Lord be [illegible] you! May he enable [illegible] on from strength to strength; and may every one [illegible] you appear before [illegible] in Zion! AMEN AND AMEN!

P. S.—The day appointed by the [illegible] Synod as a day of public Thanksgiving, is the last Thursday of November, [illegible], and the day of Fasting, last Thursday of January, 1836.

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